[Please note: The State DOE strongly encourages districts to have safe school climate plans that are specifically tailored to meet individual school/district needs, in addition to the legislative requirements. For that reason, we encourage districts to utilize Section XI of the model Safe School Climate Plan to highlight the district and school specific initiatives in your district].

Series 5000
Students

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION POLICY

The [ ] Board of Education (the "Board") is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment within the _____ Public Schools (the "District") that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and discrimination. In accordance with state law and the Board's Safe School Climate Plan, the Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on school grounds; at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop; on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board.

The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying is likewise prohibited.

Students who engage in bullying behavior or teen dating violence shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including expulsion, in accordance with the Board's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law.

For purposes of this policy, **"Bullying"** means an act that is direct or indirect and severe, persistent or pervasive, which:

(1) causes physical or emotional harm to an individual;

(2) places an individual in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm; or

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(3) infringes on the rights or opportunities of an individual at school.

Bullying shall include, but need not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

For purposes of this policy, **"Cyberbullying"** means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

For purposes of this policy, **"Teen Dating Violence"** means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or who have recently been in a dating relationship.

For purposes of this policy, **"Discrimination"** means unlawful discrimination that occurs when a student is denied participation in, or the benefits of, a program or activity of the Board because of such student's actual or perceived race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, alienage, ancestry, disability, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, veteran status, status as a victim of domestic violence or any other basis prohibited by state or federal law ("Protected Class").

For purposes of this policy, **"Harassment"** is a form of Protected Class discrimination that is prohibited by law and by this policy. Harassment constitutes unlawful discrimination when it creates a hostile environment, which occurs when the harassment is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to interfere with or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by a school. Harassment does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents. Harassment may be an act of bullying.

Consistent with the requirements under state law, the Board authorizes the Superintendent or designee(s), along with the Safe School Climate Coordinator, to be responsible for developing and implementing a Safe School Climate Plan in furtherance of this policy. As provided by state law, such Safe School Climate Plan shall include, but not be limited to provisions which:

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(1) enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees and require students and the parents or guardians of students to be notified at the beginning of each school year of the process by which students may make such reports;

(2) enable the parents or guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying;

(3) require school employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying to orally notify the safe school climate specialist, or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such oral report;

(4) require the safe school climate specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports made under this section and that the parents or guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed receive prompt notice that such investigation has commenced;

(5) require the safe school climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;

(6) include a prevention and intervention strategy for school employees to deal with bullying and teen dating violence;

(7) provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying;

(8) require each school and/or alternative school program operated by the Board ("alternative school program") to notify the parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation described in subdivision (4), above (A) of the results of such investigation, and (B) verbally or by electronic mail, if such parents' or guardians' electronic mail addresses are known, that such parents or guardians may refer to the plain language explanation of the rights and remedies

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available under Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 10-4a and 10-4b published on the Internet website of the Board;

(9) require each school and/or alternative school program to invite the parents or guardians of a student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school and/or alternative school program to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and policies and procedures in place designed to prevent further acts of bullying;

(10) require each school and/or alternative school program to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying to a meeting, separate and distinct from the meeting required in subdivision (9) above, to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school or alternative school program designed to prevent further acts of bullying;

(11) establish a procedure for each school and alternative school program to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in such school and/or alternative school program and to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in such school and/ alternative school program and make such list available for public inspection, and annually report such number to the Department of Education and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;

(12) direct the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;

(13) prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying;

(14) direct the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying was directed that address safety measures the school and/or alternative school program will take designed to protect such students against further acts of bullying;

(15) require the responsible administrator of a school and/or alternative school program, or designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such responsible administrator, or designee, believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct;

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(16) prohibit bullying (A) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board, and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, or (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;

(17) require, at the beginning of each school year, each school and/or alternative school program to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the District's safe school climate plan; and

(18) require that all school employees annually complete the training described in Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 10-220a or 10-222j related to the identification, prevention and response to bullying.

The notification required pursuant to subdivision (8) (above) and the invitation required pursuant to subdivisions (9) and (10) (above) shall include a description of the response of school employees to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying. Any information provided under this policy or accompanying Safe School Climate Plan shall be provided in accordance with the confidentiality restrictions imposed under the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act ("FERPA") and the District's Confidentiality and Access to Student Information policy and regulations.

The Board shall submit its Safe School Climate Plan to the Connecticut State Department of Education (the “Department”) for review and approval. Not later than thirty (30) calendar days after approval by the Department, the Board shall make such plan available on the Board's and each individual school or alternative school program in the District's web site and ensure that the Safe School Climate Plan is included in the District's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and alternative programs operated by the Board and in all student handbooks.

As required by state law, the Board, after consultation with the Department and the Connecticut Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative (the “Collaborative”), shall provide on the Board’s website training materials to school administrators regarding the

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prevention of and intervention in discrimination against and targeted harassment of students based on such students' (1) actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or (2) association with individuals or groups who have or are perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

As required by state law, the Board shall post on its website the plain language explanation of rights and remedies under Connecticut General Statutes §§ 10-4a and 10-4b, as developed and provided to the Board by the Collaborative.

Legal References:

Public Act 21-95

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-145a

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-145o

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-220a

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222d

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222g

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222h

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222j

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222k

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222l

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222q

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222r

Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 10-233a through 10-233f

5/1/2023

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Series 5131.911
Students

SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE PLAN

The Colchester Board of Education (the "Board") is committed to creating and maintaining a physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe educational environment within the Colchester Public Schools (the "District"), free from bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and discrimination. In order to foster an atmosphere conducive to learning, the Board has developed the following Safe School Climate Plan (the "Plan"), consistent with state law and Board policy. This Plan represents a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyberbullying and teen dating violence and sets forth the Board's expectations for creating a positive school climate and thus preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying and teen dating violence.

Bullying behavior and teen dating violence are strictly prohibited, and students who are determined to have engaged in such behavior are subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion from school. The District's commitment to addressing bullying behavior and teen dating violence, however, involves a multi-faceted approach, which includes education and the promotion of a positive school climate in which bullying will not be tolerated by students or school staff.

I. Prohibition Against Bullying, Teen Dating Violence and Retaliation

A. The Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior and teen dating violence on school grounds; at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop; on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board.

B. The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

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C. The Board further prohibits any form of teen dating violence outside of the school setting if such violence substantially disrupts the educational process.

D. In addition to prohibiting student acts that constitute bullying, the Board also prohibits discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying.

E. Students who engage in bullying behavior or teen dating violence in violation of Board policy and the Plan shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including expulsion, in accordance with the Board's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law.

II. Definition of Bullying

A. **"Bullying"** means an act that is direct or indirect and severe, persistent or pervasive, which:

(1) causes physical or emotional harm to an individual;

(2) places an individual in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm; or

(3) infringes on the rights or opportunities of an individual at school.

B. Bullying shall include, but need not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

III. Other Definitions

A. **"Cyberbullying"** means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

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B. **“Discrimination”** means unlawful discrimination that occurs when a student is denied participation in, or the benefits of, a program or activity of the Board because of such student’s actual or perceived race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, alienage, ancestry, disability, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, veteran status, status as a victim of domestic violence or any other basis prohibited by state or federal law (“Protected Class”).

C. **“Electronic communication”** means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical system.

D. **“Emotional intelligence”** means the ability to (1) perceive, recognize and understand emotions in oneself or others, (2) use emotions to facilitate cognitive activities, including, but not limited to, reasoning, problem solving and interpersonal communications, (3) understand and identify emotions, and (4) manage emotions in oneself and others.

E. **“Harassment”** is a form of Protected Class discrimination that is prohibited by law and by this policy. Harassment constitutes unlawful discrimination when it creates a hostile environment, which occurs when the harassment is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to interfere with or limit a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by a school. Harassment does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents. Harassment may be an act of bullying.

F. **“Hostile environment”** means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate.

G. **“Mobile electronic device”** means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.

H. **“Outside of the school setting”** means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an

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electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the Board.

I. **“Positive school climate”** means a school climate in which (1) the norms, values, expectations and beliefs that support feelings of social, emotional and physical safety are promoted, (2) students, parents, and guardians of students and school employees feel engaged and respected and work together to develop and contribute to a shared school vision, (3) educators model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning, and (4) each person feels comfortable contributing to the operation of the school and care of the physical environment of the school.

J. **“Prevention and intervention strategy”** may include, but is not limited to,

(1) implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying identified by the Connecticut State Department of Education (the “Department”),

(2) school rules prohibiting bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts,

(3) adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur,

(4) inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying and teen dating violence education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school,

(5) individual interventions with the bully, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied child, parents and school employees,

(6) school-wide training related to safe school climate,

(7) student peer training, education and support,

(8) promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions, and

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(9) culturally competent school-based curriculum focusing on social-emotional learning, self-awareness and self-regulation.

K. **"School climate"** means the quality and character of school life based on patterns of students', parents' and guardians' and school employees' experiences of school life, including but not limited to, norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures.

L. **"School employee"** means

(1) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, school counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by the Board or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or

(2) any other individual who, in the performance of the individual's duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the Board.

M. **"School-Sponsored Activity"** shall mean any activity conducted on or off school property (including school buses and other school-related vehicles) that is sponsored, recognized or authorized by the Board.

N. **"Social and emotional learning"** means the process through which children and adults achieve emotional intelligence through the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.

O. **"Teen dating violence"** means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or who have recently been in a dating relationship.

IV. Leadership and Administrative Responsibilities

A. Safe School Climate Coordinator

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The Superintendent shall appoint, from existing District staff, a District Safe School Climate Coordinator ("Coordinator"). The Coordinator shall:

(1) be responsible for implementing the District's Safe School Climate Plan ("Plan");

(2) collaborate with Safe School Climate Specialists, the Board, and the Superintendent to prevent, identify and respond to bullying in District schools and programs;

(3) provide data and information, in collaboration with the Superintendent, to the Department regarding bullying; and

(4) meet with Safe School Climate Specialists at least twice during the school year to discuss issues relating to bullying in the District and to make recommendations concerning amendments to the Plan.

B. Safe School Climate Specialist

The Principal of each school (or principal's designee) or responsible administrator of any alternative education program operated by the Board ("responsible administrator") shall serve as the Safe School Climate Specialist. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall investigate or supervise the investigation of reported acts of bullying, collect and maintain records of reports and investigations of bullying in the school and act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to reports of bullying in the school or program.

V. Development and Review of Safe School Climate Plan

A. The Principal of each school or responsible administrator shall establish a committee or designate at least one existing committee ("Committee") in the school or program to be responsible for developing and fostering a safe school climate and addressing issues relating to bullying in the school or program. Such committee shall include:

(1) at least one parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school or program, as appointed by the school principal or responsible administrator;

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(2) school personnel, including, but not limited to, at least one teacher selected by the exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees;

(3) medical and mental health personnel assigned to such school or program; and

(4) in the case of a committee for a high school, at least one student enrolled at such high school who is selected by the students of such school in a manner determined by the school principal or responsible administrator.

B. The Committee shall:

(1) receive copies of completed reports following bullying investigations;

(2) identify and address patterns of bullying among students in the school or program;

(3) implement the provisions of the school security and safety plan, regarding the collection, evaluation and reporting of information relating to instances of disturbing or threatening behavior that may not meet the definition of bullying,

(4) review and amend school or program policies relating to bullying;

(5) review and make recommendations to the Coordinator regarding the Plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school or program;

(6) educate students, school employees and parents/guardians on issues relating to bullying;

(7) collaborate with the Coordinator in the collection of data regarding bullying; and

(8) perform any other duties as determined by the principal or responsible administrator that are related to the prevention, identification and response to school bullying.

C. Any parent/guardian or student serving as a member of the Committee shall not participate in any activities that may compromise the confidentiality of any student, including, but not

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limited to, receiving copies of investigation reports, or identifying or addressing patterns of bullying among students in the school or program.

D. The Board shall approve the Plan developed pursuant to Board policy and submit such plan to the Department. Not later than thirty (30) calendar days after approval by the Board, the Board shall make such Plan available on the Board's and each individual school or program on the District's web site and ensure that the Plan is included in the District's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and programs and in all student handbooks.

VI. Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Complaints of Bullying

A. Students and parents (or guardians of students) may file written reports of bullying. Written reports of bullying shall be reasonably specific as to the basis for the report, including the time and place of the alleged conduct, the number of incidents, the target of the suspected bullying, and the names of potential witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any building or program administrator and/or the Safe School Climate Specialist (*i.e.,* building principal or designee), and all reports shall be forwarded to the Safe School Climate Specialist for review and actions consistent with this Plan.

B. Students may make anonymous reports of bullying to any school employee. Students may also request anonymity when making a report, even if the student's identity is known to the school employee. In cases where a student requests anonymity, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall meet with the student (if the student's identity is known) to review the request for anonymity and discuss the impact that maintaining the anonymity of the complainant may have on the investigation and on any possible remedial action. All anonymous reports shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that does not disclose the source of the report, and is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of bullying. No disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

C. School employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying shall orally notify the Safe School Climate Specialist, or another school or program administrator if the Safe School

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Climate Specialist is unavailable, not later than one (1) school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying. The school employee shall then file a written report not later than two (2) school days after making such oral report.

D. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall be responsible for reviewing any anonymous reports of bullying and shall investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall also be responsible for promptly notifying the parents or guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of bullying, and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed, that an investigation has commenced. In order to allow the District to adequately investigate complaints filed by a student or parent/guardian, the parent of the student suspected of being bullied should be asked to provide consent to permit the release of that student's name in connection with the investigation process, unless the student and/or parent has requested anonymity.

E. In investigating reports of bullying, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegations and the ages of the students involved. The Safe School Climate Specialist will interview witnesses, as necessary, reminding the alleged perpetrator and other parties that retaliation is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.

VII. Responding to Verified Acts of Bullying

A. Following investigation, if acts of bullying are verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall notify the parents or guardians of the students against whom such acts were directed as well as the parents or guardians of the students who commit such acts of bullying of the finding **not later than forty-eight (48) hours** after the investigation is completed. This notification shall include a description of the school or program's response to the acts of bullying; the results of such investigation; and verbally or by electronic mail, if such parents' or guardians' electronic mail addresses are known, that such parents of guardians may refer to the plain language explanation of the rights and remedies available under Conn. Gen. Stat. Sections 10-4a and 10-4b once such explanation has been provided to the Board by the Connecticut Social and Emotional Learning and

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School Climate Advisory Collaborative and published on the Internet website of the Board. In providing such notification, however, the District will take care to respect the statutory privacy rights of other students, including the perpetrator of such bullying. The specific disciplinary consequences imposed on the perpetrator, or personally identifiable information about a student other than the parent/guardian's own child, may not be disclosed except as provided by law.

B. In any instance in which bullying is verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall invite the parents or guardians of the student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate the measures being taken by the school or program to promote the safety of the student/victim and policies and procedures in place designed to prevent further acts of bullying. The Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall also invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying to a meeting, separate and distinct from the previously described meeting, to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school designed to prevent further acts of bullying. The invitations may be made simultaneous with the notification described above in Section VII.A.

C. If bullying is verified, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall develop a student safety support plan for any student against whom an act of bullying was directed. Such support plan will include safety measures designed to protect against further acts of bullying.

D. A specific written intervention plan shall be developed to address repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual. The written intervention plan may include counseling, discipline and other appropriate remedial actions as determined by the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee and may also incorporate a student safety support plan, as appropriate.

E. Notice to Law Enforcement

If the principal of a school or responsible administrator (or designee) reasonably believes that any act of bullying constitutes a criminal offense, the principal or responsible administrator shall notify appropriate law enforcement. Notice shall be consistent with the Board's obligations under state and federal law and Board policy regarding the disclosure of

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personally identifiable student information. In making this determination, the principal, responsible administrator or designee, may consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal, responsible administrator or designee deems appropriate.

F. If a bullying complaint raises a concern about Protected Class discrimination or harassment, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee shall also coordinate any bullying investigation with other appropriate personnel within the District as appropriate (e.g. Title IX Coordinator, Section 504 Coordinator, etc.), in a manner designed to ensure that any such bullying investigation complies with the requirements of such policies regarding nondiscrimination.

VIII. Teen Dating Violence

A. The District strictly prohibits, and takes very seriously any instances of, teen dating violence, as defined above. The District recognizes that teen dating violence may take many different forms and may also be considered bullying and/or sexual harassment.

B. Students and parents (or guardians of students) may bring verbal or written complaints regarding teen dating violence to any building or program administrator. The building or program administrator shall promptly refer the complaint to the Title IX Coordinator.

C. Prevention and intervention strategies concerning teen dating violence shall be implemented in accordance with Section X below. Discipline, up to and including expulsion, may be imposed against the perpetrator of teen dating violence, whether such conduct occurs on or off campus, in accordance with Board policy and consistent with federal and state law.

IX. Documentation and Maintenance of Log

A. Each school and program operated by the Board shall maintain written reports of bullying, along with supporting documentation received and/or created as a result of bullying investigations, consistent with the Board's obligations under state and federal law. Any educational record containing personally identifiable student information pertaining to an individual student shall be maintained in a confidential manner, and shall not be disclosed to third parties without prior written consent of a parent,

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guardian or eligible student, except as permitted under Board policy and state and federal law.

B. The Principal of each school or responsible administrator shall maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in the school or program and this list shall be available for public inspection upon request. Consistent with District obligations under state and federal law regarding student privacy, the log shall not contain any personally identifiable student information or any information that alone or in combination would allow a reasonable person in the school community to identify the students involved. Accordingly, the log should be limited to basic information such as the number of verified acts, name of school and/or grade level and relevant date. Each investigation that results in a verified act of bullying for that school year shall be tallied as one verified act of bullying unless the specific actions that are the subject of each report involve separate and distinct acts of bullying. The list shall be limited to the number of verified acts of bullying in each school or program and shall not set out the particulars of each verified act, including, but not limited, to any personally identifiable student information, which is confidential information by law.

C. The Principal of each school or responsible administrator shall report the number of verified acts of bullying in the school or program annually to the Department in such manner as prescribed by the Connecticut Commissioner of Education.

X. Other Prevention and Intervention Strategies

A. Bullying behavior and teen dating violence can take many forms and can vary dramatically in the nature of the offense and the impact the behavior may have on the victim and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying or to teen dating violence. While conduct that rises to the level of “bullying” or “teen dating violence,” as defined above, will generally warrant traditional disciplinary action against the perpetrator of such bullying or teen dating violence, whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action (e.g., detention, in-school suspension, suspension or expulsion) is a matter for the professional discretion of the building principal (or responsible program administrator or designee). No disciplinary action may be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint of bullying. As discussed below, schools and programs may also consider appropriate alternatives to traditional

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disciplinary sanctions, including age-appropriate consequences and other restorative or remedial interventions.

B. A specific written intervention plan shall be developed to address repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual. This plan may include safety provisions, as described above, for students against whom acts of bullying have been verified and may include other interventions such as counseling, discipline, and other appropriate remedial or restorative actions as determined by the responsible administrator.

C. The following sets forth possible interventions, which may also be utilized to enforce the Board's prohibition against bullying and teen dating violence:

(1) Non-disciplinary interventions

When verified acts of bullying are identified early and/or when such verified acts of bullying do not reasonably require a disciplinary response, students may be counseled as to the definition of bullying, its prohibition, and their duty to avoid any conduct that could be considered bullying. Students may also be subject to other forms of restorative discipline or remedial actions, appropriate to the age of the students and nature of the behavior.

If a complaint arises out of conflict between students or groups of students, peer or other forms of mediation may be considered. Special care, however, is warranted in referring such cases to peer mediation. A power imbalance may make the process intimidating for the victim and therefore inappropriate. In such cases, the victim should be given additional support. Alternatively, peer mediation may be deemed inappropriate to address the concern.

When an act or acts of teen dating violence are identified, the students involved may be counseled as to the seriousness of the conduct, the prohibition of teen dating violence, and their duty to avoid any such conduct. Students may also be subject to other forms of restorative discipline or remedial actions,

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appropriate to the age of the students and nature of the behavior.

(2) Disciplinary interventions

When acts of bullying are verified or teen dating violence occurs, and a disciplinary response is warranted, students may be subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences. Anonymous complaints of bullying, however, shall not be the basis for disciplinary action.

In-school suspension and suspension may be imposed only after informing an accused student of the reasons for the proposed suspension and giving the accused student an opportunity to explain the situation, in accordance with the Board's Student Discipline policy.

Expulsion may be imposed only after a hearing before the Board, a committee of the Board or an impartial hearing board designated by the Board in accordance with the Board's Student Discipline policy. This consequence shall normally be reserved for serious incidents of bullying and teen dating violence, and/or when past interventions have not been successful in eliminating bullying behavior and/or teen dating violence.

(3) Interventions for bullied students and victims of teen dating violence

The building principal (or other responsible program administrator) or designee shall intervene in order to address incidents of bullying or teen dating violence against a single individual. Intervention strategies for a bullied student or victim of teen dating violence may include the following:

(a) Referral to a school counselor, psychologist or other appropriate social or mental health service;

(b) Increased supervision and monitoring of student to observe and intervene in bullying situations or instances of teen dating violence;

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(c) Encouragement of student to seek help when victimized or witnessing victimization;

(d) Peer mediation or other forms of mediation, where appropriate;

(e) Student Safety Support plans;

(f) Restitution and/or restorative interventions; and

(g) Periodic follow-up by the Safe School Climate Specialist and/or Title IX Coordinator with the bullied student or victim of teen dating violence.

(4) General prevention and intervention strategies

In addition to the prompt investigation of complaints of bullying and direct intervention when acts of bullying are verified, other District actions may ameliorate potential problems with bullying in school or at school-sponsored activities. Additional District actions may also ameliorate potential problems with teen dating violence. While no specific action is required, and school needs for specific prevention and intervention strategies may vary from time to time, the following list of potential prevention and intervention strategies shall serve as a resource for administrators, teachers and other professional employees in each school and District program. Such prevention and intervention strategies may include, but are not limited to:

(a) School and program rules prohibiting bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts;

(b) Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying or teen dating violence are likely to occur;

(c) Inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying and teen dating violence education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school, which may include instruction regarding building safe and positive school communities including developing healthy

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relationships and preventing dating violence as deemed appropriate for older students;

(d) Individual interventions with the perpetrator, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied student, parents and school employees;

(e) School-wide training related to safe school climate, which training may include Title IX sex discrimination/sexual harassment prevention training, Section 504/ADA training, cultural diversity/multicultural education or other training in federal and state civil rights legislation or other topics relevant to safe school climate;

(f) Student peer training, education and support;

(g) Promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions;

(h) Implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for a safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying and teen dating violence, including any such program identified by the Department;

(i) Respectful responses to bullying and teen dating violence concerns raised by students, parents or staff;

(j) Planned professional development programs addressing prevention and intervention strategies, which training may include school violence prevention, conflict resolution and prevention of bullying and teen dating violence, with a focus on evidence based practices concerning same;

(k) Use of peers to help ameliorate the plight of victims and include them in group activities;

(l) Avoidance of sex-role stereotyping;

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(m) Continuing awareness and involvement on the part of school employees and parents with regards to prevention and intervention strategies;

(n) Modeling by teachers of positive, respectful, and supportive behavior toward students;

(o) Creating a school atmosphere of team spirit and collaboration that promotes appropriate social behavior by students in support of others;

(p) Employing classroom strategies that instruct students how to work together in a collaborative and supportive atmosphere; and

(q) Culturally competent school-based curriculum focusing on social-emotional learning, self-awareness and self-regulation.

D. In addition to prevention and intervention strategies, administrators, teachers and other professional employees may find opportunities to educate students about bullying and help eliminate bullying behavior through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially-appropriate behavior. Administrators, teachers and other professional employees should intervene promptly whenever they observe mean-spirited student conduct, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of "bullying."

E. Funding for the school-based bullying intervention and school climate improvement strategy may originate from public, private, federal or philanthropic sources.

XI. Improving School Climate

[Individual schools and programs should use this section to outline affirmative steps to improve the quality of school climate as defined within a particular school, program and/or district. These strategies should align with school improvement plans and school climate assessments, and be based on current data available on the quality of school climate within the school, program and/or district including, but not limited to, the type, nature, frequency etc. of behavior that may constitute or lead to bullying, teen dating violence, harassment or similar behavior. This section is intended to be broader in scope and should be targeted towards fostering positive school climate rather than exclusively preventing,

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investigating and otherwise responding to specific incidences of bullying and teen dating violence.]

XII. Annual Notice and Training

A. Students, and parents or guardians of students shall be notified annually of the process by which students may make reports of bullying.

B. The Board shall provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying.

C. At the beginning of each school year, each school and program shall provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the District's safe school climate plan and require that all school employees annually complete training on the identification, prevention and response to bullying as required by law.

D. As required by state law, the Board, after consultation with the Department and the Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative (the "Collaborative"), shall also provide on its website training materials to school administrators regarding the prevention of and intervention in discrimination against and targeted harassment of students based on such students' (1) actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or (2) association with individuals or groups who have or are perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

E. Any person appointed by the District to serve as District safe school climate coordinator shall complete mental health and first aid training offered by the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

XIII. School Climate Assessments

Biennially, the Board shall require each school and program in the District to complete an assessment using the school climate assessment instruments, including surveys, approved and disseminated by the Department. The Board shall collect the school climate assessments for each school and program in the District and submit such assessments to the Department.

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Legal References:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222d

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222g

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222h

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222j

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222k

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222l

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222q

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222r

Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 10-233a through 10-233f

Connecticut State Department of Education Circular Letter C-8, Series 2008-2009 (March 16, 2009)

Connecticut State Department of Education Circular Letter C-3, Series 2011-2012 (September 12, 2011)

Connecticut State Department of Education Circular Letter C-2, Series 2014-2015 (July 14, 2014)

Connecticut State Department of Education Circular Letter C-1, Series 2018-2019 (July 12, 2018)

Connecticut State Department of Education Circular Letter C-1, Series 2019-2020 (July 16, 2019)

5/1/2023

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[SAMPLE FORM A]

REPORT OF SUSPECTED BULLYING BEHAVIORS OR TEEN DATING VIOLENCE
(School Employees Should File with Any School or Program Administrator)
(Parents and Students May File with Any School or Program Administrator or Any Other School Employee)

Name of Person Completing Report:
_____

Date: _____

Target(s) of Behaviors/Violence:
_____

Relationship of Reporter to Target (self, parent, teacher, peer, etc.):
_____
_____

Report Filed Against:_____
__

Date of Incident(s):
_____

Location(s):_____ Time:
_____

Describe the basis for your report. Include information about the incident, participants, background to the incident, and any attempts you have made to resolve the problem. Please note relevant dates, times and places.
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

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_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Indicate if there are witnesses who can provide more information regarding your report. If the witnesses are not school district staff or students, please provide contact information.

Name Address Telephone Number Email Address

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Have there been previous incidents? (circle one) Yes No

If “yes”, please describe the behavior of concern, or the violence that occurred; include the approximate date(s) and the location(s):

_____
_____
_____
_____

Were these incidents reported to school employees? (circle one) Yes No

If “Yes”, to whom was it reported and when?

_____

Was the report verbal or written?

_____

Proposed Solution:

Indicate your opinion on how this problem might be resolved in the school setting. Be as specific as possible.

_____
_____
_____
_____

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I certify that the above information and events are accurately depicted to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Reporter	Date Submitted	Received By	Date Received
	5/1/2023		

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[SAMPLE FORM B]

INTERNAL INVESTIGATION NOTES FOR REPORTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIORS

For Staff Use Only:

Has student reporter requested anonymity? Y N

Does the school or program have parent/guardian consent to disclose that a complaint as to this student has been filed in connection with the investigation? Y N

Administrative Investigation Notes (use separate sheet if necessary):

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Bullying Verified? Yes ___ No ____

Remedial Action(s)
Taken:_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_

(Attach bullying complaint and witness statements. If bullying is verified, attach notification to parents of students involved, invitation to parent meetings, and records of parent meetings).

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[SAMPLE FORM C]

[_____] PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REPORT OF BULLYING FORM/INVESTIGATION SUMMARY

For Staff Use Only:_____

School _____ Date _____

Location(s) _____

Reporter Information:

Anonymous student report _____

Employee report _____ Name _____

Parent/Guardian report_____ Name _____

Student report _____ Name _____

Student Reported as Committing Act:
_____

Student Reported as Victim:
_____

Description of Alleged Act(s):
_____

_____

Time and Place:_____

Names of Potential Witnesses: _____

_____

Action of Reporter: _____

Administrative Investigation Notes (use separate sheet if necessary):
_____

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_____

_____

_____

_____

Bullying Verified? Yes ___ No ____

Remedial Action(s) Taken:_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

If Bullying Verified, Has Notification Been Made to Parents of Students Involved?

Parents' Names: _____ Date Sent:_____
Parents' Names: _____ Date Sent:_____
Parents' Names: _____ Date Sent:_____
Parents' Names: _____ Date Sent: _____

If Bullying Verified, Have Invitations to Meetings Been Sent to Parents of Students Involved?

Parents' Names: _____ Date Sent:_____
Parents' Names: _____ Date Sent:_____
Parents' Names: _____ Date Sent:_____
Parents' Names: _____ Date Sent: _____

Date of Meetings:

_____
_____

If Bullying Verified, Has School or Program Developed Student Safety Support/Intervention Plan?

Y N

(Attach bullying complaint and witness statements. If bullying is verified, attach: 1) notification to parents of students involved that includes a description of the school or program's response to the acts of bullying, the results of the investigation, and via e-mail if e-mail addresses are known, a statement that the parents may refer to the plain language explanation of rights and remedies available

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under Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 10-4a and 10-4b once such explanation has been provided to the Board by the Connecticut Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative and published on the District's website; 2) invitations to parent meetings; and 3) and records of parent meetings).
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[SAMPLE FORM D]

[_____] Public Schools
Report of Bullying/Consent to Release Student Information

Date: _____

Name of Student: _____

School: _____

To Parent/Guardian:

A report of bullying has been made on behalf of your child alleging that your child has been the victim of bullying. In order to facilitate a prompt and thorough investigation of the report, the [_____] Public Schools may wish to disclose the fact that this complaint has been filed in connection with investigation.

(Please check one):

_____ I hereby give permission for the [_____] Public Schools to disclose the fact that a complaint concerning my child has been filed as part of its investigation of that complaint.

_____ I do **NOT** give permission for the [_____] Public Schools to disclose the fact that a complaint concerning my child has been filed as part of its investigation of that complaint.

_____
Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

_____
Name (Please print)

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[SAMPLE FORM E]

[_____] Public Schools
Report of Teen Dating Violence/Consent to Release Student Information

Date: _____

Name of Student: _____

School: _____

To Parent/Guardian:

A report of teen dating violence has been made on behalf of your child alleging that your child has been the victim of teen dating violence. In order to facilitate a prompt and thorough review of the report, the [_____] Public Schools may wish to disclose the fact that this complaint has been filed in connection with its review.

(Please check one):

_____ I hereby give permission for the [_____] Public Schools to disclose the fact that a complaint concerning my child has been filed as part of its review of that complaint.

_____ I do **NOT** give permission for the [_____] Public Schools to disclose the fact that a complaint concerning my child has been filed as part of its review of that complaint.

_____
Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

_____
Name (Please print)

5/1/2023

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